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(54) **SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR BIOMETRIC IDENTITY AND AUTHENTICATION**

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*Primary Examiner* — Yin Chen Shaw

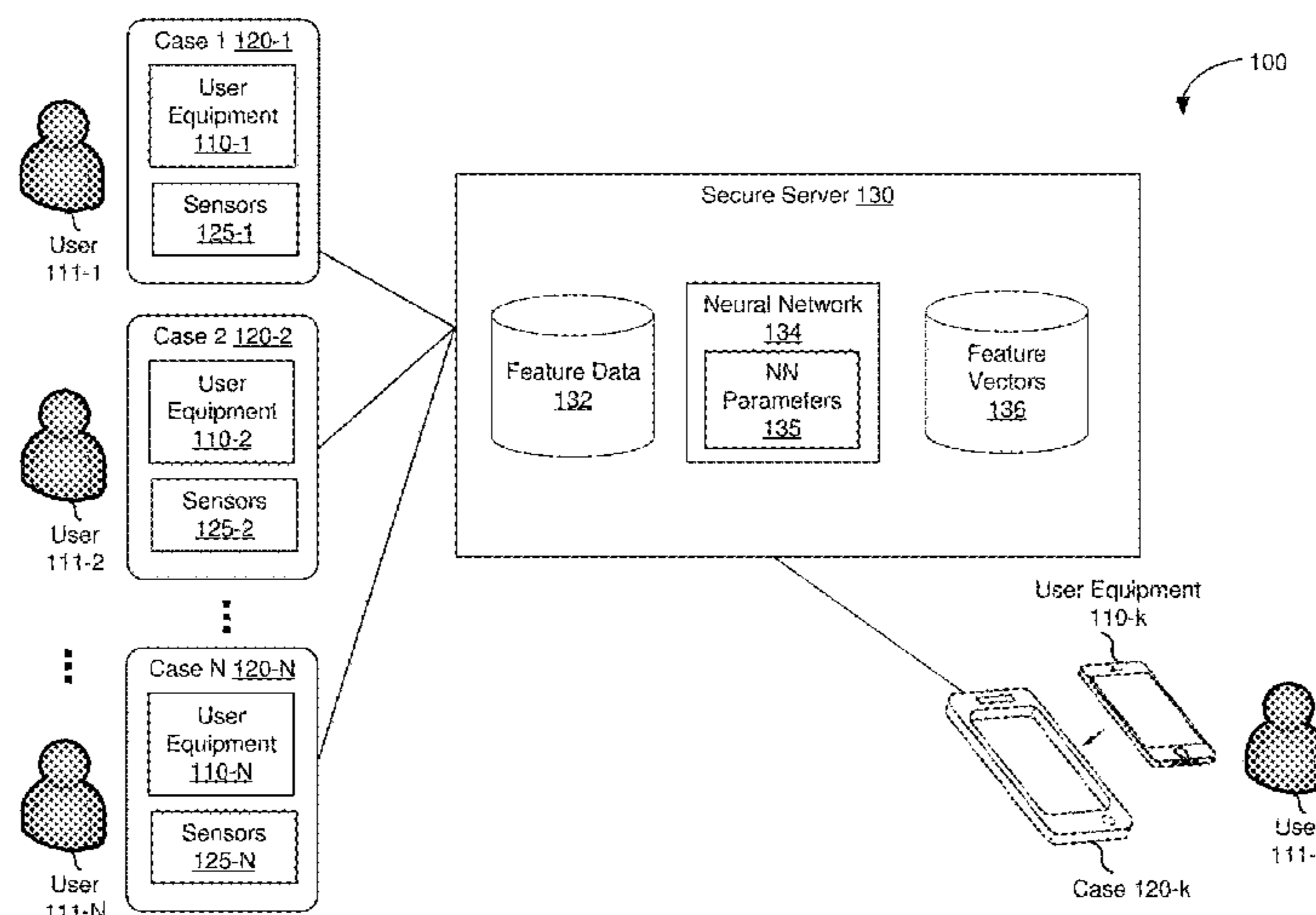
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

In accordance with some embodiments, an apparatus for privacy protection is provided. The apparatus includes a housing arranged to hold a second device; one or more sensors, at least partially supported by the housing, operable to continuously collect biometric data of a user; an authentication neural network, operable to extract from the biometric data a plurality feature vectors associated with a plurality of identifiable scores; and a decision unit, coupled to the authentication neural network, operable to generate an authentication score as a function of the plurality of identifiable scores and the plurality of feature vectors, determine whether or not the authentication score satisfies an authentication threshold, and gate electronic access to the second device base on whether or not the authentication score satisfies the authentication threshold.

**20 Claims, 10 Drawing Sheets**



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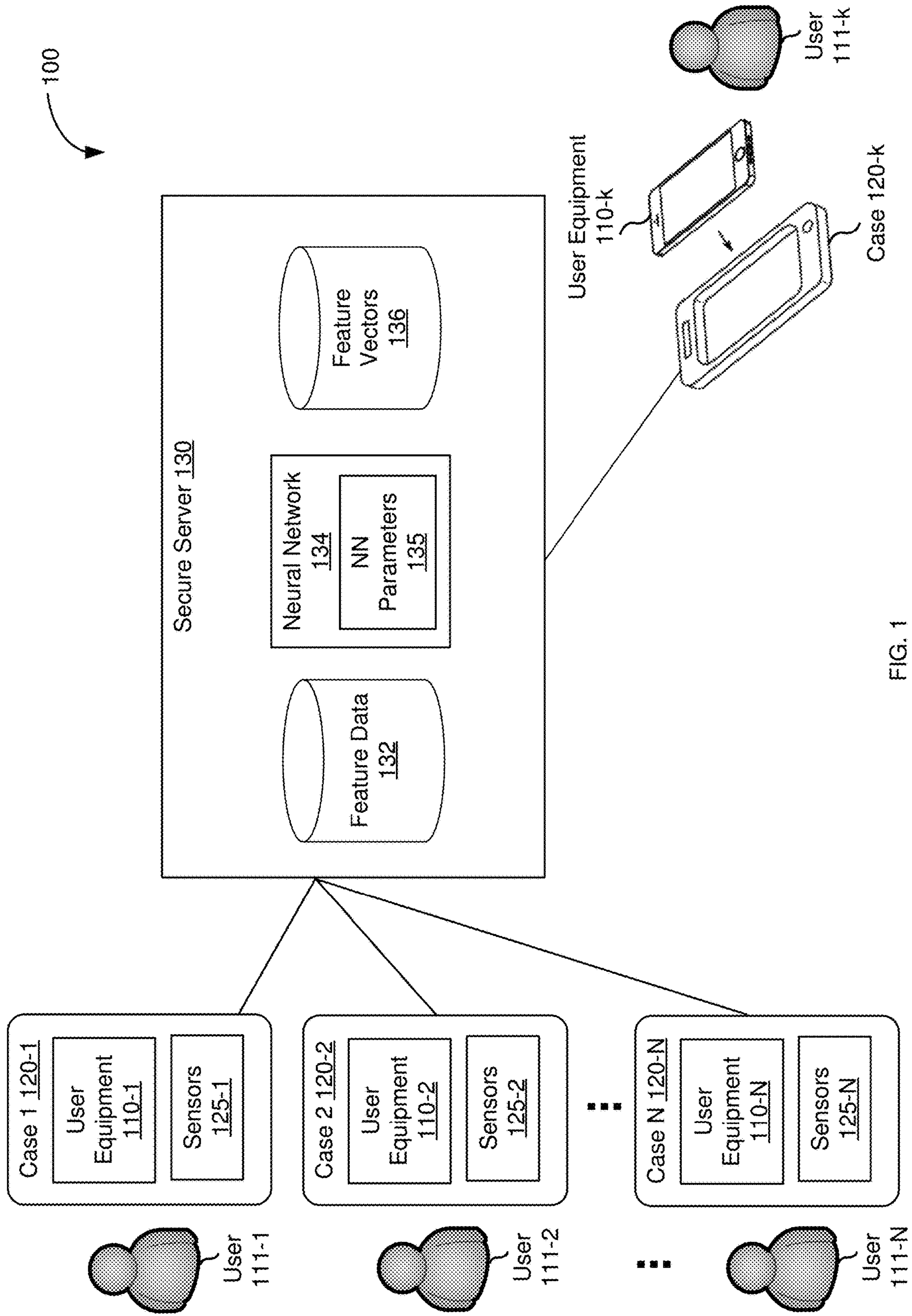


FIG. 1

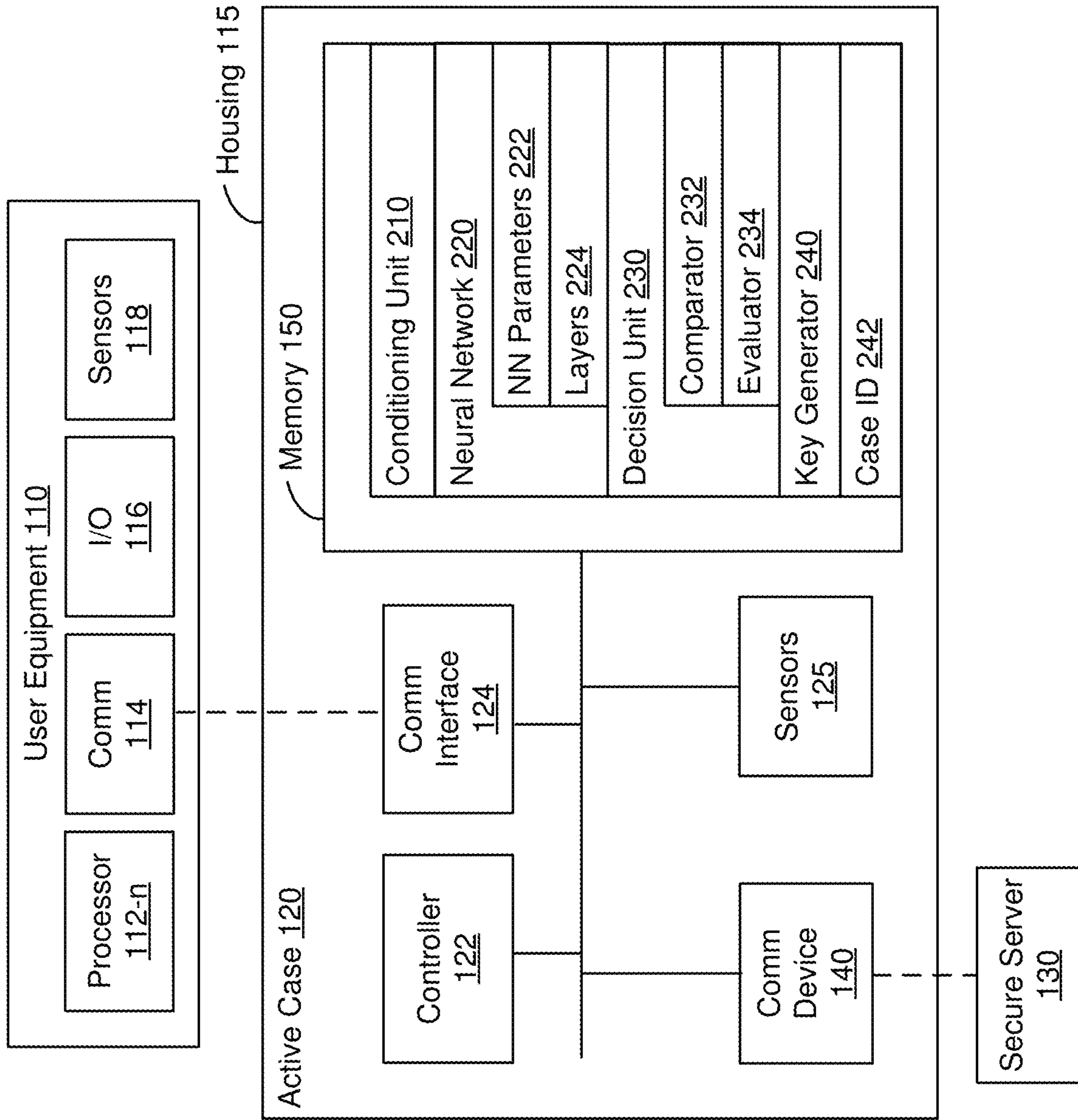


FIG. 2

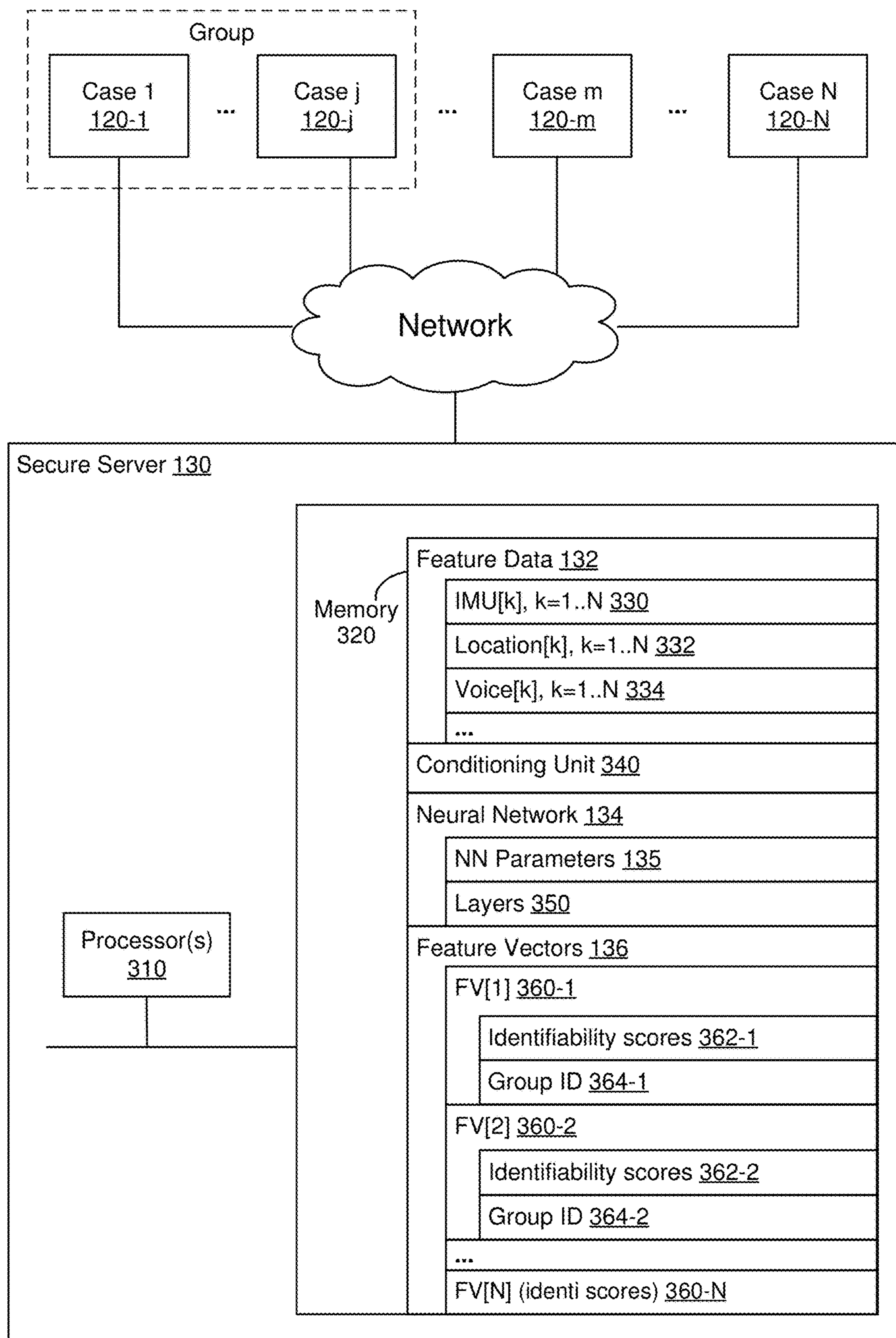


FIG. 3

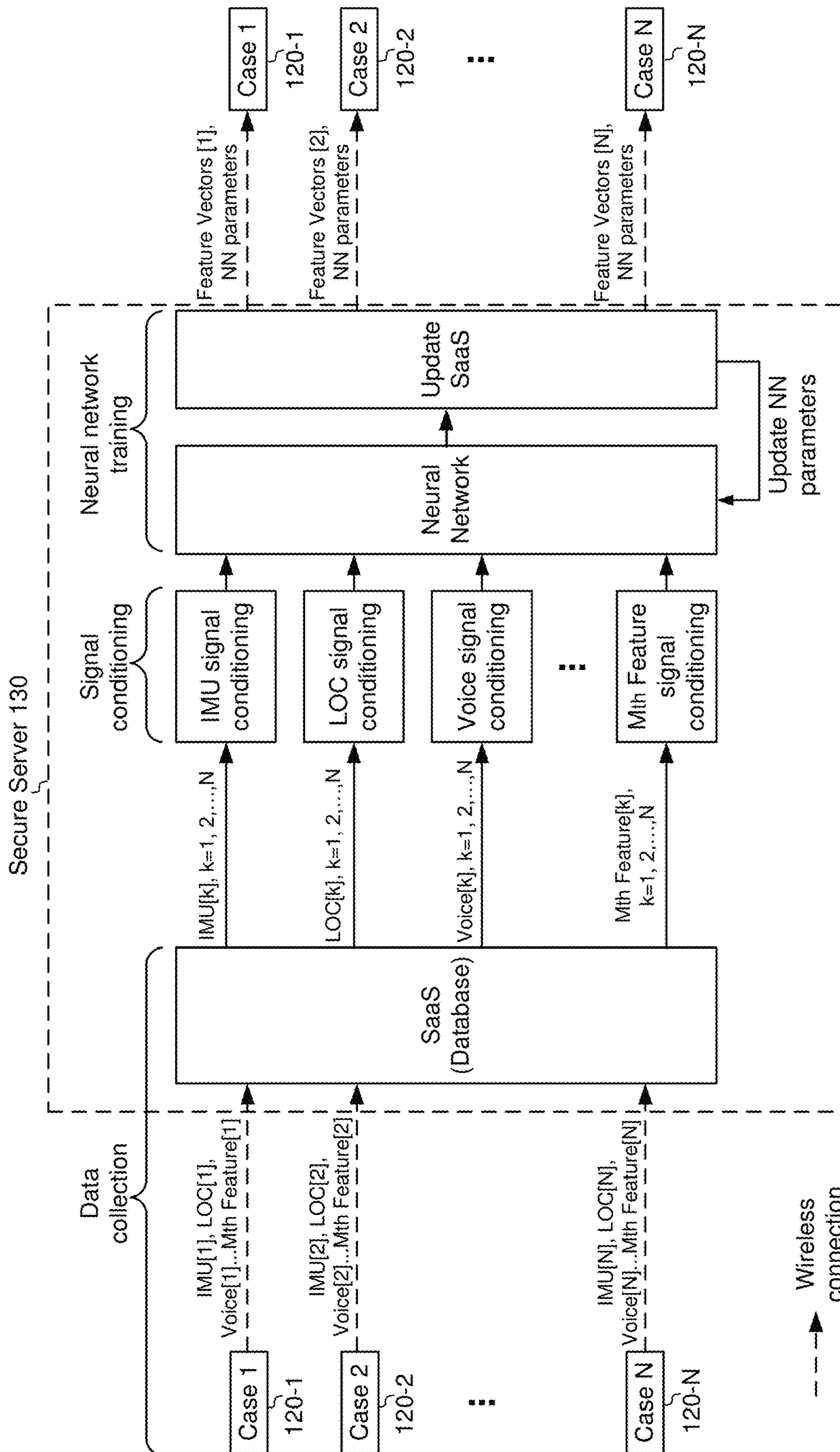


FIG. 4

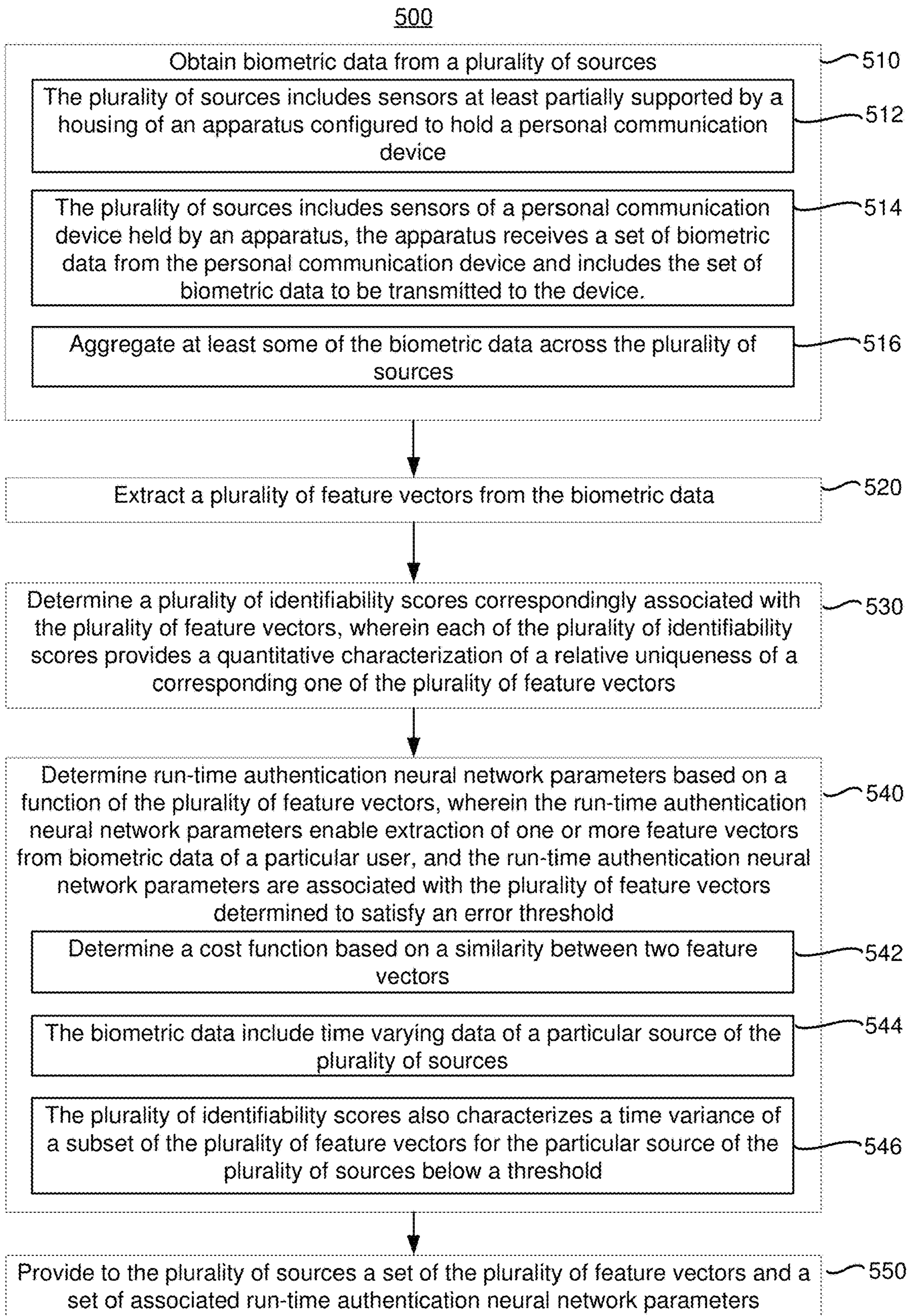


FIG. 5

600

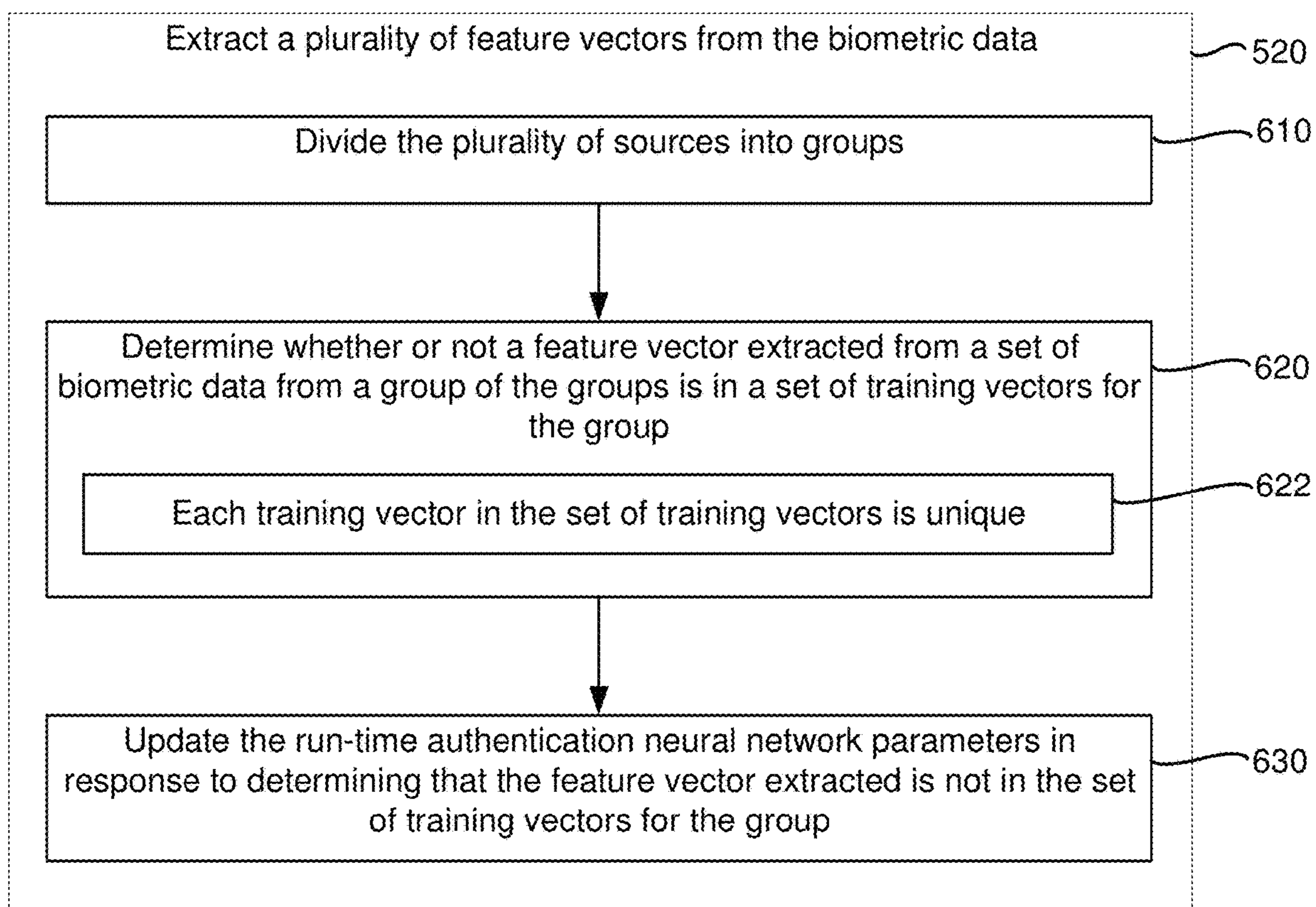


FIG. 6



700

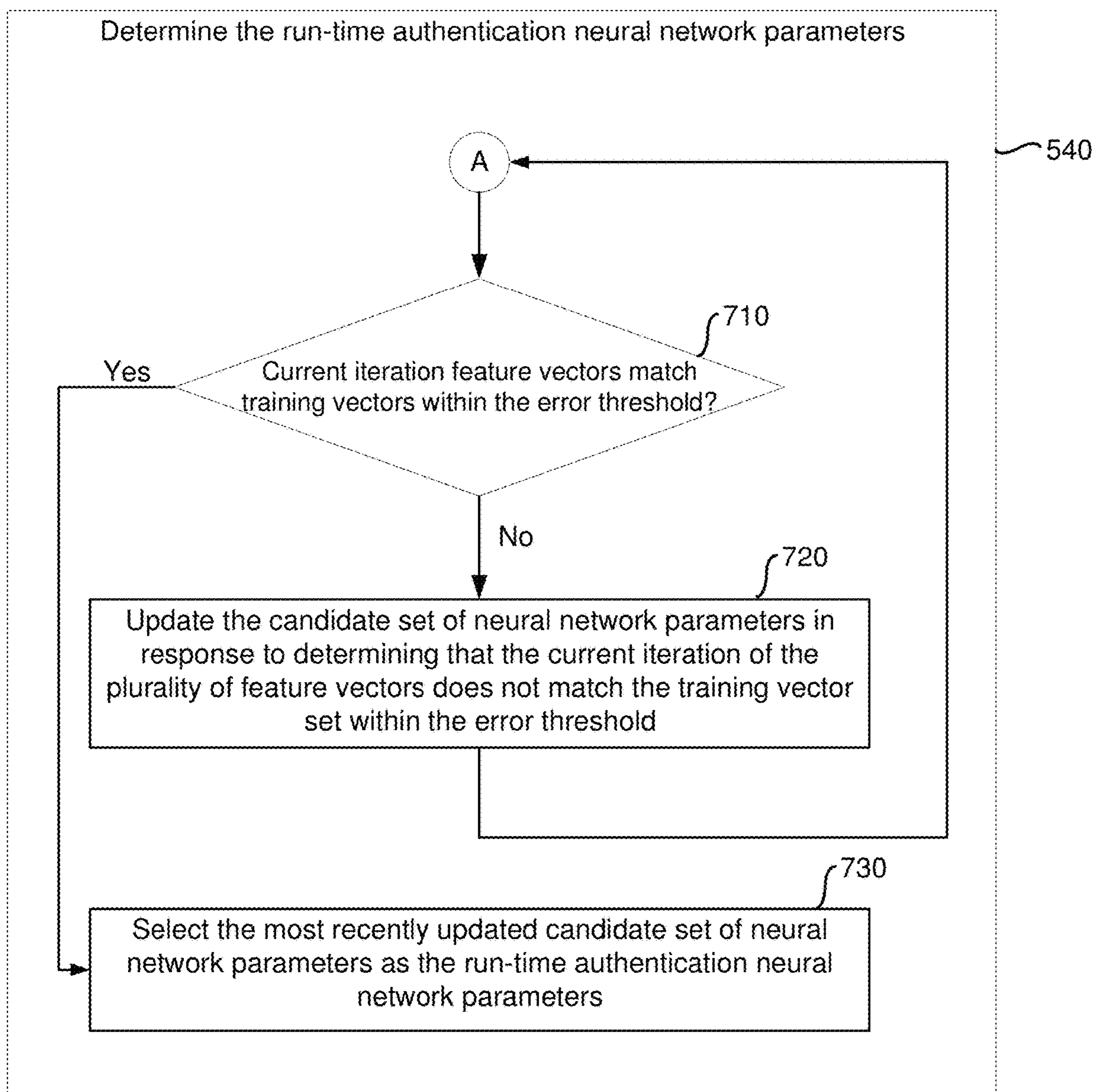


FIG. 7

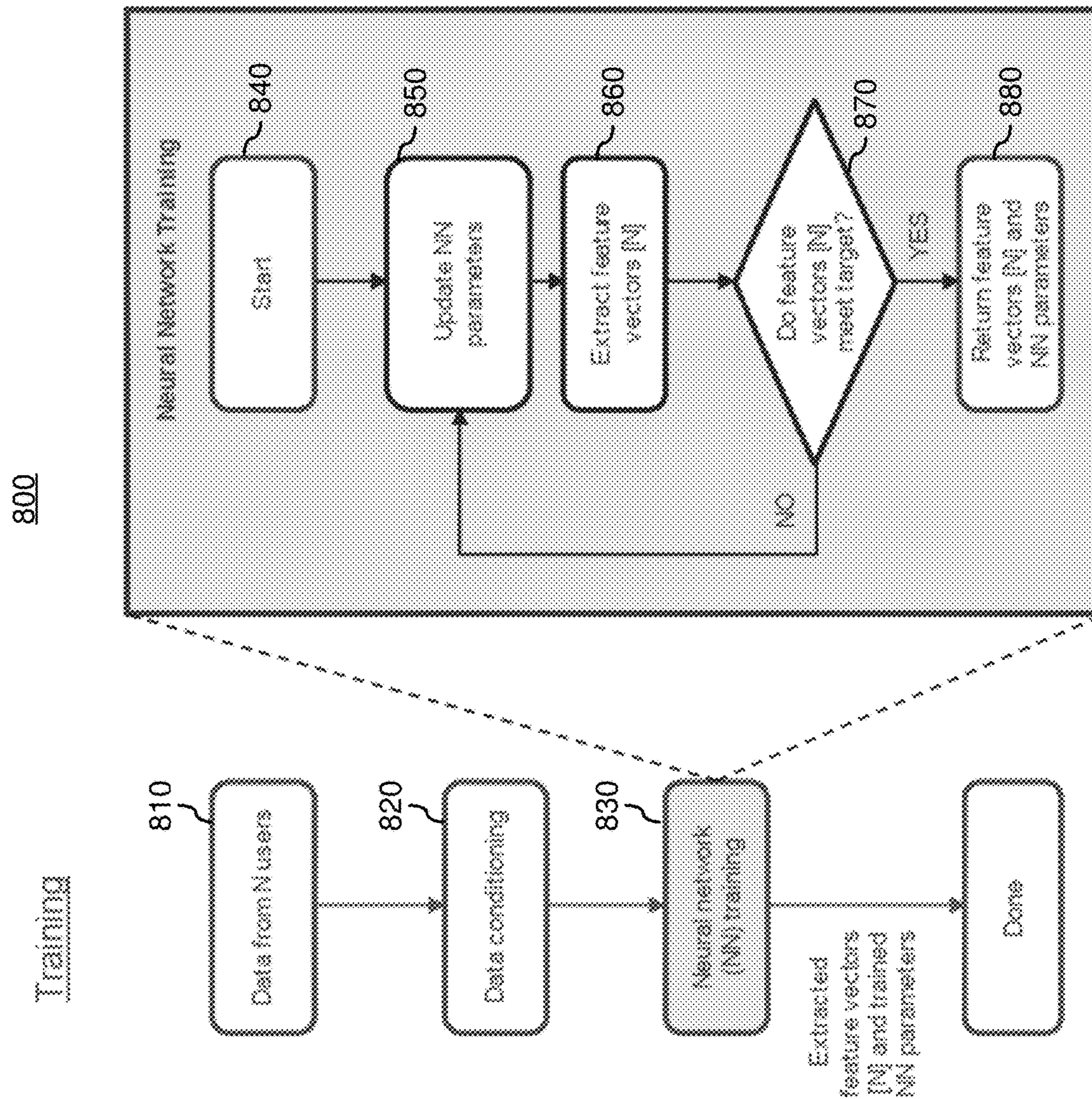


FIG. 8

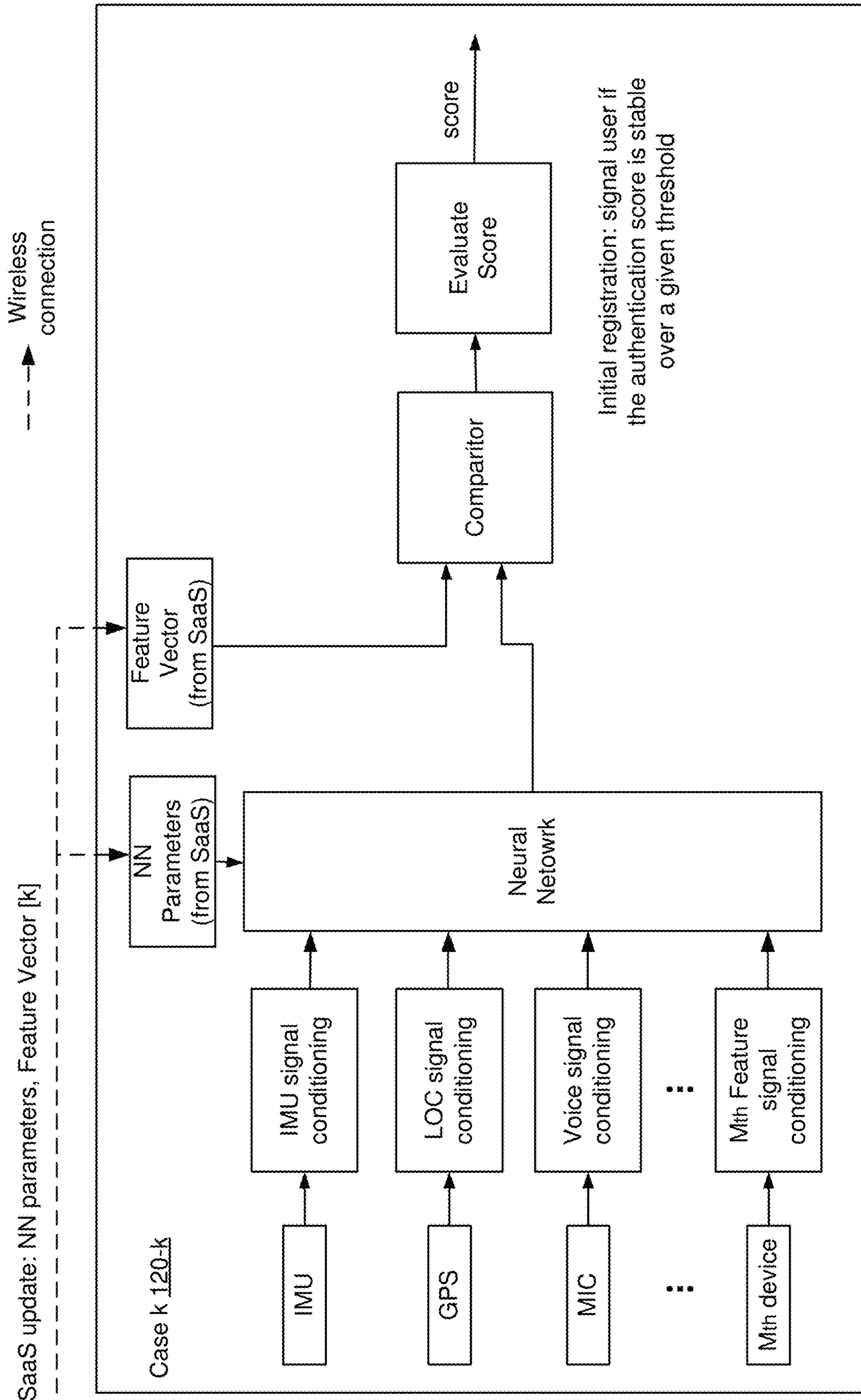


FIG. 9

Authentication 1000

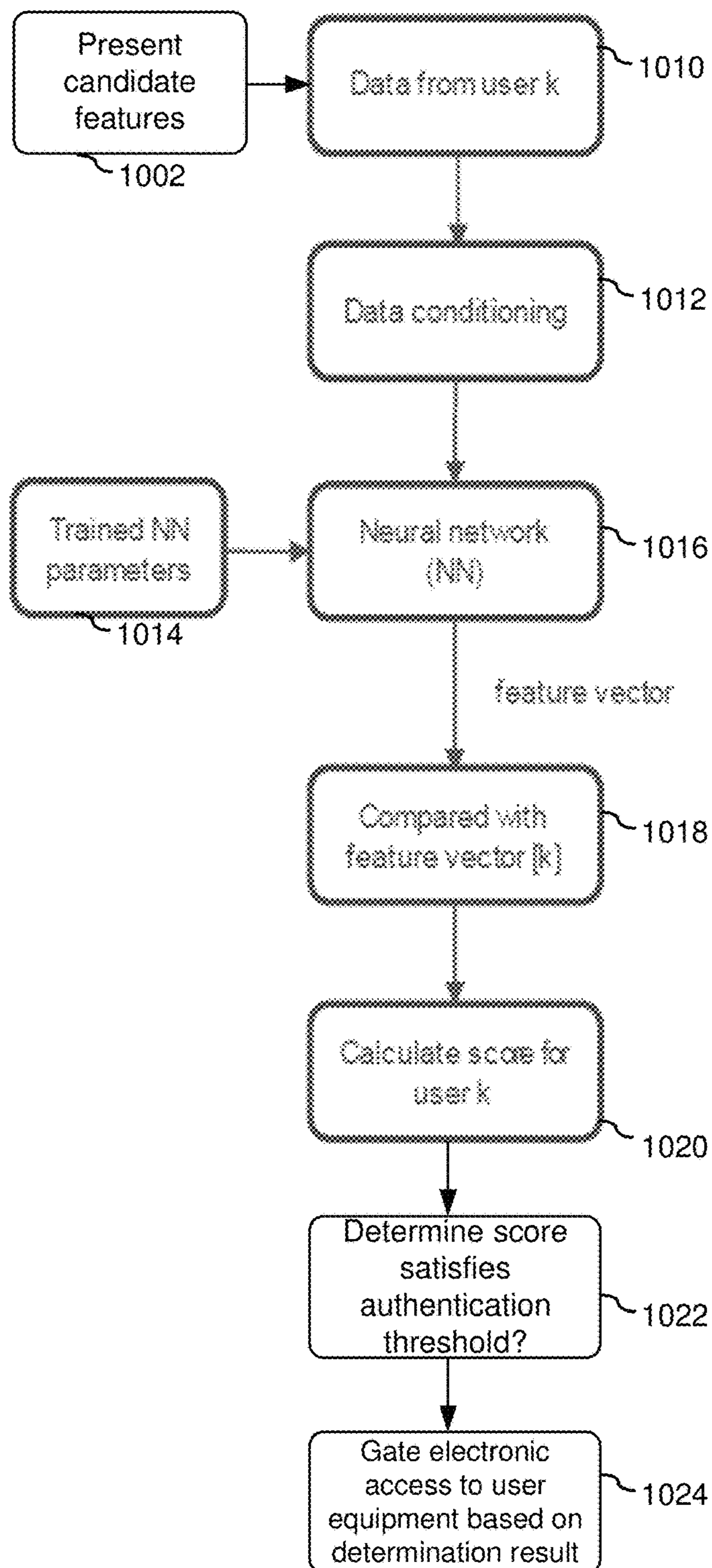


FIG. 10

**1****SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR BIOMETRIC  
IDENTITY AND AUTHENTICATION**

## PRIORITY CLAIM

This application claims priority to U.S. provisional patent application No. 62/588,890 filed on Nov. 20, 2017, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

## TECHNICAL FIELD

This relates generally to the field of biometric identification, and more specifically to biometric identity extraction for authentication.

## BACKGROUND

An exponential growth of smart devices gives rise to security and privacy concerns. It is necessary to authenticate a user's identity in order to prevent appropriation of private information from the smart devices. In recent years, authentication mechanisms using biometric data have shown the potential of providing enhanced authentication over traditional password ("what you know") and token ("what you have") authentication approaches.

Biometric characteristics have many desirable traits, such as unique to each individual ("what you are"), non-transferable to others, impossible to forget or lose, difficult to reproduce, and difficult to change or hide. Thus, many have developed biometric identity and authentication (IDA) systems that use biometric data for authentication. However, many existing biometric IDA systems focus on point-of-entry authentication (e.g., fingerprint, iris scan, etc.). The point-of-entry authentication technique has a number of weaknesses. For example, once the user identity, including a forged identity (e.g., by providing a fingerprint image), has been verified at login, the user often gains unfettered access to the smart device. To increase the level of authentication beyond the standard point-of-entry authentication technique, some have proposed continuous biometric authentication. To this end, research suggests that no single biometric approach is ideally suited to all scenarios, e.g., the ability to be compromised, ease of use, obtrusiveness, and/or the embodiment complexity, etc.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

So that the present disclosure can be understood by those of ordinary skill in the art, a more detailed description can be had by reference to aspects of some illustrative embodiments, some of which are shown in the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1 is a system diagram of an exemplary secure platform for biometric identity and authentication (IDA) of users of user equipment in accordance with some embodiments;

FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating exemplary devices and components in the secure platform in accordance with some embodiments;

FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating exemplary apparatuses and an exemplary server in the secure platform in accordance with some embodiments;

FIG. 4 is an illustration of data collection and machine learning in the secure platform in accordance with some embodiments;

FIG. 5 is a flow diagram illustrating a neural network training method in accordance with some embodiments;

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FIG. 6 is a flow diagram illustrating a method of feature extraction in accordance with some embodiments;

FIG. 7 is a flow diagram illustrating a method of determining run-time authentication neural network parameters in accordance with some embodiments;

FIG. 8 is a flow diagram illustrating another neural network training method in accordance with some embodiments;

FIG. 9 is a block diagram illustrating performing biometric IDA on an active case during registration in accordance with some embodiments; and

FIG. 10 is a flow diagram illustrating a method of biometric IDA in accordance with some embodiments.

In accordance with common practice the various features illustrated in the drawings cannot be drawn to scale. Accordingly, the dimensions of the various features can be arbitrarily expanded or reduced for clarity. In addition, some of the drawings cannot depict all of the components of a given system, method or device. Finally, like reference numerals can be used to denote like features throughout the specification and figures.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Accordingly, described herein is an apparatus that is part of a secure platform providing improved continuous multi-factor authentication (CMFA). In particular, the secure platform disclosed herein in accordance with embodiments provides a physical unclonable function (PUF) that is ideal for authentication. A PUF typically has three properties. First, the PUF can be easily generated. Second, the PUF can be reliably evaluated. Third, it is impossible to predict or duplicate the PUF. In the secure platform disclosed herein, the apparatus disclosed herein holds the user equipment and collects multiple sources of time-varying biometric data of the user in accordance with some embodiments. As the user casually interacts with the user equipment, the secure platform disclosed herein receives the collected data from the apparatus and applies machine learning to derive patterns from the data in accordance with some embodiments. The learned patterns are then used as identities to provide CMFA of the user using the user equipment. In other words, in the secure platform disclosed herein, the authentication identity derived from the multi-source biometric data can be easily generated (e.g., as the user casually interacts with the user equipment), can be reliably evaluated (e.g., by evaluating multiple sources of biometric data from a plurality of users), and is difficult to predict or duplicate (e.g., the biometric features are time-varying). It naturally follows that the secure platform for biometric (IDA) disclosed herein provides strong privacy and security protection of the user equipment.

In accordance with some embodiments, a method (e.g., for training of a neural network) is performed at a device with one or more processors and a non-transitory memory storing instructions for execution by the one or more processors. In some embodiments, the method includes obtaining biometric data from a plurality of sources; extracting a plurality of feature vectors from the biometric data; determining a plurality of identifiability scores correspondingly associated with the plurality of feature vectors, wherein each of the plurality of identifiability scores provides a quantitative characterization of a relative uniqueness of a corresponding one of the plurality of feature vectors; and determining run-time authentication neural network parameters based on a function of the plurality of feature vectors, wherein the run-time authentication neural network param-

eters enable extraction of one or more feature vectors from biometric data of a particular user, and the run-time authentication neural network parameters are associated with the plurality of feature vectors determined to satisfy an error threshold.

In accordance with some embodiments, a method (e.g., for training of a neural network) is performed at a device with one or more processors and a non-transitory memory storing instructions for execution by the one or more processors. In some embodiments, the method includes obtaining biometric data from a plurality of sources; establishing a candidate set of neural network parameters; extracting a plurality of feature vectors from the biometric data using the candidate set of neural network parameters; determining whether or not the plurality of feature vectors match a training vector set within an error threshold; updating the candidate set of neural network parameters in response to determining that the plurality of feature vectors do not match the training vector set within the error threshold; selecting the candidate set of run-time authentication neural network parameters to be run-time authentication neural network parameters in response to determining that the plurality of feature vectors match the training vector set within the error threshold, wherein the run-time authentication neural network parameters enable extraction of one or more feature vectors from biometric data of a particular user; and determining a plurality of identifiability scores correspondingly associated with the plurality of feature vectors, wherein each of the plurality of identifiability scores provides a quantitative characterization of a relative uniqueness of a corresponding one of the plurality of feature vectors.

In accordance with some embodiments, a method (e.g., for authentication using a trained neural network) is performed at a first device arranged to hold a second device. In some embodiments, the method includes obtaining biometric data of a user of the second device; extracting from the biometric data, using an authentication neural network, a plurality of feature vectors associated with a plurality of identifiability scores; generating an authentication score as a function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the plurality of feature vectors, wherein each of the plurality of identifiability scores provides a quantitative characterization of a relative uniqueness of a corresponding one of a plurality of feature vectors; determining whether or not the authentication score satisfies an authentication threshold; and gating electronic access to the second device based on whether or not the authentication score satisfies the authentication threshold.

In accordance with some embodiments, an apparatus is disclosed that includes a housing arranged to hold a second device; one or more sensors, at least partially supported by the housing, operable to continuously collect biometric data of a user; a run-time authentication neural network, operable to extract from the biometric data a plurality feature vectors associated with a plurality of identifiable scores; a decision block, coupled to the run-time authentication neural network, operable to generate an authentication score as a function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the plurality of feature vectors, determine whether or not the authentication score satisfies an authentication threshold, and generate a lock signal to the second device in response to determining that the authentication score does not satisfy the authentication threshold; and a communication interface, connectable to the second device, operable to provide the lock signal to the second device.

In accordance with some embodiments, a device includes one or more processors, non-transitory memory, and one or

more programs; the one or more programs are stored in the non-transitory memory and configured to be executed by the one or more processors and the one or more programs include instructions for performing or causing performance of the operations of any of the methods described herein. In accordance with some embodiments, a non-transitory computer readable storage medium has stored therein instructions which when executed by one or more processors of a device, cause the device to perform or cause performance of the operations of any of the methods described herein. In accordance with some embodiments, a device includes means for performing or causing performance of the operations of any of the methods described herein.

Reference will now be made in detail to embodiments, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. In the following detailed description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the various described embodiments. However, it will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art that the various described embodiments may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known methods, procedures, components, circuits, and networks have not been described in detail so as not to unnecessarily obscure aspects of the embodiments.

It will also be understood that, although the terms “first”, “second”, etc., are, in some instances, used herein to describe various elements, these elements should not be limited by these terms. These terms are only used to distinguish one element from another. For example, a first contact could be termed a second contact, and, similarly, a second contact could be termed a first contact, without departing from the scope of the various described embodiments. The first contact and the second contact are both contacts, but they are not the same contact, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

The terminology used in the description of the various described embodiments herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting. As used in the description of the various described embodiments and the appended claims, the singular forms “a”, “an”, and “the” are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. It will also be understood that the term “and/or” as used herein refers to and encompasses any and all possible combinations of one or more of the associated listed items. It will be further understood that the terms “includes”, “including”, “comprises”, and/or “comprising” when used in this specification, specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps, operations, elements, and/or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, operations, elements, components, and/or groups thereof.

As used herein, the term “if” is, optionally, construed to mean “when” or “upon” or “in response to determining” or “in response to detecting”, depending on the context. Similarly, the phrase “if it is determined” or “if [a stated condition or event] is detected” is, optionally, construed to mean “upon determining” or “in response to determining” or “upon detecting [the stated condition or event]” or “in response to detecting [the stated condition or event]”, depending on the context.

It should be appreciated that in the development of any actual embodiment (as in any development project), numerous decisions must be made to achieve the developers’ specific goals (e.g., compliance with system- and business-related constraints), and that these goals will vary from one embodiment to another. It will also be appreciated that such

development efforts might be complex and time consuming but would nevertheless be a routine undertaking for those of ordinary skill in the art of image capture having the benefit of this disclosure.

Referring to FIG. 1, a simplified block diagram of a secure platform 100 for continuous biometric IDA of users 111 of user equipment 110 is depicted, in accordance with some embodiments. Continuous biometric IDA typically works passively in the background of a device. It typically requires an initial registration phase (or an enrollment phase) and an authentication phase. In some embodiments, the secure platform 100 for continuous biometric IDA includes a server 130 (e.g., a secure server providing Software as a service (SaaS)), which further includes a neural network 134 for machine learning of biometric data obtained from a plurality of apparatuses 120. As used herein, the apparatus 120 is also referred to as a base 120, a case 120, an active base 120, or an active case 120. Though FIG. 1 illustrates a neural network 134 for machine learning, it should be appreciated that the embodiments are not limited to the neural network described herein. A variety of machine learning techniques can be used, including, for example, recurrent neural networks (RNN), random forest classifiers, Bayes classifiers (e.g., naive Bayes), principal component analysis (PCA), support vector machines, linear discriminant analysis, and the like. For the sake of brevity, conventional techniques related to the signal processing and data transmission for obtaining the input data for machine learning and the individual operating components of the machine learning may not be described in detail herein.

In the exemplary secure platform 100, each active case 120 holds a user equipment 110 (also referred to as a personal communication device 110, an electronic device 110, or a device 110). For example, each user equipment 110 can be slid or inserted into a housing (e.g., the housing 115 in FIG. 2) of the corresponding active case 120. This action is indicated in FIG. 1 by the arrow depicting a movement from the user equipment 110-*k* to the case 120-*k*. In some embodiments, during the enrollment phase, the user 111 accesses the user equipment 110 as usual, while sensors 125 of the active case 120 collect at least a portion of the biometric data to be communicated to the secure server 130. After observing the user's behavior for a period of time, the secure server 130 learns characteristics of the user's behavioral data by machine learning (e.g., by setting neural network parameters 135 in connection with neurons in the neural network 134), and the secure server 130 stores the learned patterns in feature vectors 136 for future reference. During the authentication phase, the active case 120 continuously compares current user behaviors with the learned user model stored in the feature vectors 136 to make an authentication decision and gates electronic access to the active case 120, e.g., locking or unlocking the user equipment 110 held by the active case 120.

In some embodiments, the user equipment 110 is a portable communications device, such as a mobile phone, a wearable device, a tablet, a laptop computer, a digital media player, an electronic reader, or the like. In some embodiments, the user equipment 110 is a non-portable device, such as a desktop computer, a data storage device, a smart TV, a video game console, a smart home appliance, or the like that is capable of storing and exchanging data wirelessly or through wire in a network (e.g., the Internet, wireless network, peer-to-peer network, optical network, Ethernet, intranet, wired network through connectors, and/or cables). It will be appreciated that the components, devices, or elements illustrated in and described with respect to FIG. 1

below may not be mandatory and thus some may be omitted in certain embodiments. Additionally, some embodiments can include further or different components, devices or elements beyond those illustrated in and described with respect to FIG. 1.

FIG. 2 is a simplified block diagram illustrating an exemplary user equipment 110, an exemplary apparatus (e.g., the active base 120 or the active case 120), and an exemplary server 130 in the secure platform 100, in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, the active case 120 includes a housing 115 arranged to hold the user equipment 110. Though not shown in FIG. 2, in some embodiments, the housing 115 includes a plurality of components mateable with one another. In other words, the plurality of components of the housing 115, once mated with one another, form an assembly to receive and hold the user equipment 110. The assembly allows a user 111 to insert the user equipment 110 into the active case 120 or take the user equipment 110 out of the active case 120. Different from a conventional base or case that merely holds a user equipment, the active case 120 actively monitors biometric data related to the user 111 of the user equipment 110 and provides continuous biometric IDA based on the biometric data.

In some embodiments, the user equipment 110 held by the active case 120 includes a processor 112, one or more communication devices 114, input/output devices 116, sensors 118, and memory for storing data as well as instructions executed by the processor 112. In some embodiments, the input/output devices 116 include a display (including a touch screen display), a touch-sensitive surface, a keyboard (virtual or physical), a mouse, a pen, microphones, cameras, and/or speakers. In some embodiments, the one or more communication devices 114 connect the user equipment 110 and an external electronic device wirelessly (e.g., using wireless modem) or through a wired connection. In some embodiments, the external electronic device is the active case 120, such that the one or more communication devices 114 connect to the active case 120 wirelessly or through a wired communication. The wireless communication includes at least one of, for example, Wi-Fi (e.g., IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11g, IEEE 802.11n, and/or IEEE 802.11ac), Bluetooth (BT), Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE), Near Field Communication (NFC), Global Positioning System (GPS), and/or cellular communication, including but not limited to Long-Term Evolution (LTE), Wideband Code Division Multiple Access (W-CDMA), code division multiple access (CDMA), time division multiple access (TDMA), or Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM). The wired connections include at least one of, for example, a Universal Serial Bus (USB) connector, a High Definition Multimedia Interface (HDMI) connector, and/or a Lightning® (a registered trademark of Apple Inc. of Cupertino, Calif.) connector.

In some embodiments, the user equipment 110 includes sensors 118, such as one or more accelerometers, gyroscopes, and/or magnetometers (e.g., as part of an inertial measurement unit (IMU)) for obtaining information concerning the position (e.g., altitude) of the user equipment 110. In some embodiments, the sensors 118 are coupled to the input/output devices 116, e.g., touch sensors and/or force sensors coupled to a touch sensitive surface and/or a keyboard, sound sensors coupled to a microphone, or light sensors coupled to a camera. In some embodiments, the sensors 118 are coupled to the one or more communication devices 114, so that the information collected by the sensors 118 can be transmitted to another device (e.g., to the active

case **120** via a communication interface **124**) for validation, identification, and/or authentication of the user **111** of the user equipment **110**.

In addition to the sensors **118** for biometric data collection, in some embodiments, the active case **120** holding the user equipment **110** also includes sensors **125** that independently collect biometric data of the user **111**. In some embodiments, the sensors **125** include one or more accelerometers, gyroscopes, magnetometers (e.g., as part of an inertial measurement unit (IMU)), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), compasses, barometers, photometers and thermometers, touch sensors, force sensors, vibration sensors, motion recording sensors, light sensors, microphones for recording voice, electrocardiogram sensors, hydration sensors, and/or the like. The information collected by the sensors **125**, in conjunction with the information collected by the sensors **118** of the user equipment **110**, is used for validation, identification, and/or authentication of the user.

In some embodiments, the biometric data collected by the sensors **125** and/or **118** are communicated through a communication device **140** and/or a communication interface **124** of the active case **120**. In some embodiments, the communications through the communication device **140** and/or the communication interface **124** are encrypted to form secure channels in order to further protect the secure platform **100**. In some embodiments, the communication device **140**, which is at least partially supported by the housing **115**, connects the active case **120** to another electronic device, e.g., a different case **120**, a different user equipment **110**, or the secure server **130** wirelessly or through a wired connection. In some embodiments, the communication interface **124**, which is also at least supported by the housing **115**, is connectable to the user equipment **110** held by the active case **120**, e.g., by connecting to the one or more communication devices **114** of the user equipment **110**. The communication through the communication interface **124** can be wireless or wired. The wireless connections include, for example, Wi-Fi (e.g., IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11g, IEEE 802.11n, and/or IEEE 802.11ac), Bluetooth (BT), Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE), Near Field Communication (NFC), Global Positioning System (GPS), and/or cellular communication, including but not limited to Long-Term Evolution (LTE), Wideband Code Division Multiple Access (W-CDMA), code division multiple access (CDMA), time division multiple access (TDMA), or Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM). The wired connections include for example, a Universal Serial Bus (USB) connector, a High Definition Multimedia Interface (HDMI) connector, a Lightning® (a registered trademark of Apple Inc. of Cupertino, Calif.) connector, and/or contact pins or pads. Through the communication interface **124**, the active case **120** receives data (e.g., biometric data sensed by sensors **118** of the user equipment **110**) from the user equipment **110**, sends the data to the secure server **130** during the enrollment phase, and sends signals (e.g., locking or unlocking) to the user equipment **110** based on a decision made at the active case **120** during the authentication phase.

In some embodiments, the active case **120** includes circuitry (e.g., a bus) that interconnects components of the active case **120**, including the communication interface **124**, the communication device **140**, and the sensors **125**. In some embodiments, the active case **120** further includes a controller **122** that controls various components of the active case **120**. In some embodiments, the controller **122** is on a single chip or chipset. The controller **122** can be embodied in a variety of forms, e.g., as various hardware-based

processing means, as instructions stored in memory **150** and executed by a processor, or as a combination of hardware, firmware, and software.

In some embodiments, the active case **120** includes memory **150**, which further includes high-speed random-access memory, such as DRAM, SRAM, DDR RAM, or other random access solid state memory devices, and non-volatile memory, such as one or more magnetic disk storage devices, optical disk storage devices, flash memory devices, or other non-volatile solid-state storage devices. In some embodiments, the memory **150**, including the non-volatile and volatile memory device(s) within the memory **150**, comprises a non-transitory computer readable storage medium. In some embodiments, the memory **150** or the non-transitory computer readable storage medium of the memory **150** stores the following programs and data structures, or a subset thereof including a conditioning unit **210**, a neural network **220**, a decision unit **230**, and a key generator **240**.

In some embodiments, the conditioning unit **210** receives the signals from the sensors **125** and/or **118** and preprocesses the signals. For example, for voice or audible signals captured by the sensors **125** and/or **118**, the conditioning unit **210** conditions the signals by generating temporal frames of the audible signals, filtering, isolating and/or emphasizing certain portions of the frequency spectrum, adjusting the spectral composition of the temporal frames, converting the audible signals into a frequency domain representation, and/or producing (rectifying) an absolute value (e.g., modulus value) signal for each temporal frame, and/or the like. In another example, the conditioning unit **210** conditions the IMU signals in preparation for gait feature extraction by performing spectral analysis of the IMU signals and applying a low pass filter to the raw IMU signals. In yet another example, for electrocardiogram (ECG) signals, the conditioning unit **210** applies a finite impulse response (FIR), performs R-peak detection, removes outliers, and normalizes the signals prior to feature extraction.

Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that though FIG. **2** illustrates one conditioning unit **210**, the function of the conditioning unit **210** can be further subdivided into additional units. In some embodiments, the conditioning unit **210** comprises a plurality of conditioning units with one for conditioning a type of biometric signals or a characteristic of biometric signals, e.g., one for ECG signals or R-peak detection of the ECG signals, one for audio signals or frequency spectrum shaping, one for motion signals or one for IMU signals, and/or the like. In some embodiments, the conditioning unit **210** takes biometric traits from different sensors, and combines them to form a composite biometric trait and conditions the composite biometric trait in preparation for feature extraction, e.g., combining IMU and location signals as indicators for gait feature extraction. The aforementioned functions performed by the conditioning unit **210** are provided merely as examples of the various aspect and functions described herein.

In some embodiments, the neural network **220** is installed on the active case **120** and neural network parameters are downloaded prior to authenticate the user **111** of the user equipment **110**. In some embodiments, the neural network **220** includes a plurality of layers **224**, including an input layer coupled to receive the conditioned signal from the conditioning unit **210**, and a number of layers adjacent the input layer, e.g., hidden layer(s) adjacent the input layer and an output layer adjacent the hidden layer(s). In some embodiments, the plurality of layers **224** include logical



units, e.g., neurons, as referred to by those of ordinary skill in the art, such that each neuron consists of inputs and an output with the output as a function of the inputs and each input is modified by a weight. Once the neural network **134** on the server **130** is trained, the weights are downloaded to the active case **120** and stored as the neural network parameters **222** of the neural network **220** in accordance with some embodiments. The learned weights are then used by the neural network **220** during the authentication phase for feature extraction.

In some embodiments, the feature vectors extracted by the neural network **220** are provided to the decision unit **230** coupled to the neural network **220**. In some embodiments, the neural network **220** outputs the feature vectors along with a plurality of identifiability scores, each of which provides a quantitative characterization of a relative uniqueness of a corresponding one of the plurality of feature vectors. In some embodiments, based on the outputs from the neural network **220**, the decision unit **230** generates an authentication score as a function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the plurality of feature vectors. In some embodiments, the decision unit **230** also determines whether or not the authentication score satisfies an authentication threshold, and gates electronic access to the user equipment **110** based on whether or not the authentication score satisfies the authentication threshold. In some embodiments, the decision unit **230** includes a comparator **232** to compare the feature vectors extracted by the neural network **220** with the plurality of feature vectors **136** in order to derive a difference. In some embodiments, the decision unit **230** includes an evaluator **234** to determine an authentication score based on the input and to provide an indication of whether the authentication score is stable based on the difference.

The authentication score provides a foundation on which access policy decisions are made. For example, if the decision unit **230** determines that the authentication score generated for a user satisfies the authentication threshold (e.g., falls within an acceptable range) for accessing a system comprising the user equipment **110**, the active case **120**, and/or the secure server **130**, the user would be allowed into the system. On the other hand, in some embodiments, if the decision unit **230** determines that the authentication score fails to satisfy the authentication threshold (e.g., falls below the acceptable range), the decision unit **230** can challenge the user, e.g., ask the user to provide one or more specified biometric traits. Further, parameters associated with the neural network **220** can be adjusted based on policy and ever-evolving capabilities and information. For example, as sufficient data is gathered in certain sensor categories, a new trait can be enabled and the corresponding biometric data can be gathered through new sensors and used as part of the multi-factor authentication. In another example, as the neural network **220** is enhanced or found to be vulnerable to certain new attacks, administrators can adjust weights assigned to features associated with traits used in the new attacks.

In some embodiments, the key generator **240** derives an authentication key from the feature vectors outputted by the neural network **220**. For example, upon obtaining feature vectors from the neural network **220**, the key generator **240** takes the most significant bits of the features of the obtained feature vectors, and generates a bit stream. The bit stream provides a random number that can be used as a secret key for authentication, data encryption, and/or decryption. In some embodiments, the key generated by the key generator **240** is provided to the decision unit **230** for generating the authentication score as a function of the plurality of identi-

fiability scores and the authentication key. In other words, the randomized key becomes one factor of the multi-factor authentication.

In some embodiments, the active case **120** includes a secure storage to store an identifier **242** (e.g., a case identifier) of the active case **120**. In some embodiments, the decision unit **230** retrieves the identifier **242** from the secure storage and generates the authentication score as a function of the plurality of identifiability scores, the plurality of feature vectors outputted from the neural network **220**, and the identifier **242**. In other words, the case identifier **242** is part of the multi-factor authentication that provides a “what you have” factor in the authentication scheme disclosed herein.

For example, a third-party can steal the IMU data via many means, e.g., by luring the user to a website and running malicious code without the user’s knowledge, even when the smart device is locked. The third party can then use the IMU data and attempt to produce an authentication score based on gait, typing, and/or tremor etc. Knowing someone can steal or spoof the CMFA to certain degree, the secure platform **100** adds the case identifier to the authentication score calculation, so that the third party would need to have the physical device (the case **120**) to pass the authentication. As such, by including the case identifier **242** as part of the CMFA, the secure platform **100** prevents an attacker from remotely impersonating the user **111**, e.g., by knowing their credentials or stealing/spoofing the user’s biometric data.

FIG. 3 is a simplified block diagram illustrating exemplary apparatuses **120** and an exemplary server **130** in the secure platform **100**, in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, the server **130** is a secure server that communicates with the plurality of cases **120** through a secure channel, e.g., data exchanged between the case **120** and the server **130** are encrypted using a key generated by the key generator **240** of the case **120**. In some embodiments, the secure server **130** includes one or more processors **310**, a network interface (not shown), and a non-transitory memory **320** storing instructions for execution by the one or more processors **310**. As shown, the one or more processors **310** are interconnected with the non-transitory memory **320** and the network interface **311**, and the server **130** is connected to the network via the network interface **311**.

In some embodiments, the non-transitory memory **320** includes high-speed random-access memory, such as DRAM, SRAM, DDR RAM, or other random access solid state memory devices, and non-volatile memory, such as one or more magnetic disk storage devices, optical disk storage devices, flash memory devices, or other non-volatile solid-state storage devices. In some embodiments, the non-transitory memory **320**, including the non-volatile and volatile memory device(s) within the non-transitory memory **320**, comprises a non-transitory computer readable storage medium. In some embodiments, the non-transitory memory **320** or the non-transitory computer readable storage medium of the non-transitory memory **320** stores the following programs and data structures, or a subset thereof including the feature data **132**, a conditioning unit **340**, the neural network **134**, and the feature vectors **136**.

In some embodiments, the server **130** receives the biometric data from a plurality of active cases **120** (e.g., active case **120-1**, . . . , active case **120-j**, . . . , active case **120-m**, . . . , active case **120-N**) that aggregates the biometric data from multiple sources and stores the aggregated data according to the type or characteristic in the feature data **132**. For example, data collected by IMU sensors of the

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apparatuses **120** and/or the user equipment **110** are stored as IMU data **330** (e.g., IMU[k], where  $k=1 \dots N$ ). In another example, data collected by GPS and/or compass units of the apparatuses **120** and/or the user equipment **110** are stored as location data **332** (e.g., location[k], where  $k=1 \dots N$ ). In yet another example, data collected by microphones of the apparatuses **120** and/or the user equipment **110** are stored as voice data **334** (e.g., voice[k], where  $k=1 \dots N$ ).

Considering the limited computational and storage resources in the active case **120**, the training of the neural network **134** is executed on the secure server **130**. In some embodiments, in preparation for the training, the conditioning unit **340** retrieves the feature data **132** stored in the non-transitory memory **320** (e.g., the IMU data **330**, the location data **332**, the voice data **334**, and/or the like), and performs the signal conditioning function described above with reference to the conditioning unit **210** of the active case **120**. The conditioned data are then provided to the neural network **134** for training. During training, in some embodiments, the neural network **134** learns representative features at the layers **350** through the setting of the neural network parameters **135**. As such, the values of the weight matrices are adjusted during the training until an error convergence threshold is satisfied. Various training methods in accordance with embodiments are described below with reference to FIGS. **5-8**. Once the neural network **134** is trained, the server **130** stores the extracted feature vectors **136** and the neural network parameters **135**. In addition, the server **130** determines a plurality of identifiability scores **362** correspondingly associated with the feature vectors and stores as part of the feature vectors **136**. For example, feature vectors **360-1** for case **1 120-1** are associated with identifiability scores **362-1**. In some embodiments, each of the plurality of identifiability scores **362** provides a quantitative characterization of a relative uniqueness of a corresponding one of the plurality of feature vectors. For example, an identifiability score of 20% for voice-related features vectors provides a quantitative characterization of the relative uniqueness of the voice related feature vectors. The feature vectors **136**, which include the identifiability scores **362** for the corresponding feature vectors **360**, and the neural network parameters **135** are then used for authentication, as will be described in detail below with reference to FIGS. **8** and **9**.

In some embodiments, the plurality of cases **120** are divided into groups, as shown in FIG. **3**. The neural network **134** is trained for each group. As will be described below with reference to FIG. **6**, smaller-sized groups allow for deeper data depth and the neural network **134**, once trained, can provide better feature vectors. The extracted features are stored in the feature vectors **136** and associated with group identifiers **364**, e.g., feature vectors for case **1 360-1** are associated with the group identifier **364-1**, and feature vectors for case **1 360-2** are associated with the group identifier **364-2**, etc.

FIG. **4** is a simplified block diagram illustrating the data collection and machine learning in the secure platform **100**, in accordance with some embodiments. During the training phase, the server **130** (e.g., a secure server providing SaaS) obtains biometric data from a plurality of apparatuses **120** (e.g., case **1 120-1**, case **2 120-2**, . . . , case **N 120-N** as shown in FIGS. **1** and **3**), e.g., via wireless connections. Upon receiving the data, the secure server **130** stores the data in a SaaS database (e.g., the feature data **132** in FIGS. **1** and **3**) and labels the data. For example, IMU[1], Location [1], Voice[1], M-th feature[1] are labeled as biometric data from case[1], IMU[1], Location[2], Voice[2], M-th feature [2] are labeled biometric data from case[2] . . . IMU[N],

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Location[N], Voice[N], M-th feature[N] are labeled as biometric data from case[N]. In some embodiments, the secure server **130** aggregates the data by characteristics of the biometric feature associated with the data, such as combining the IMU data from N cases **120** as IMU[k], where  $k=1, 2, \dots, N$ , combining the location data from N cases **120** as Location[k], where  $k=1, 2, \dots, N$ , combining the voice data from N cases **120** as Voice[k], where  $k=1, 2, \dots, N$ , and combining the M-th feature from N cases **120** as M-th feature[k], where  $k=1, 2, \dots, N$ . In some embodiments, the aggregated data are also stored in the SaaS database (e.g., in the feature data **132** in FIGS. **1** and **3**).

It should be noted that the data stored in the SaaS database can be raw signal data or signal data that has already been preprocessed by the cases **120**. In either scenario, the secure server **130** can further condition the data stored in the SaaS database (e.g., with the conditioning unit **340**, FIG. **3**) in preparation for feature extraction. As explained above with reference to FIG. **3**, in some embodiments, the conditioning unit **340** comprises a plurality of conditioning units with one for conditioning a type or a characteristic of biometric signals. As such, as shown in FIG. **4**, an IMU signal conditioning unit conditions the aggregated IMU data IMU [k], where  $k=1, 2, \dots, N$ ; a location signal conditioning unit conditions the aggregated location data Location[k], where  $k=1, 2, \dots, N$ ; a voice signal conditioning unit conditions the aggregated voice data Voice[k], where  $k=1, 2, \dots, N$ ; and a Mth feature signal conditioning unit for conditioning the aggregated M-th feature signal M-th feature[k], where  $k=1, 2, \dots, N$ , etc. The conditioned signals are then provided to the neural network for training.

Once receiving the conditioned signals, the neural network updates the neural network parameters as shown in FIG. **4** during the neural network training. As explained above with reference to FIG. **3**, the layers **350** of the neural network **134** include an input layer coupled to the conditioning unit **340** and a number of layers adjacent to the input layer, e.g., hidden layer(s) and an output layer. In some embodiments, the layers **350** include logical units, i.e., neurons as referred to by those of ordinary skill in the art, such that each neuron consists of inputs and an output with the output as a function of the inputs and each input is modified by a weight. The neural network **134** learns representative features at the layers **350** through the setting of neural network parameters **135** (e.g., adjusting automatically according to policy or adjusting manually by administrators), such that the values of the weight matrices are adjusted during the training until an error convergence threshold is satisfied. For example, after receiving generic voice data from many people representing the population. The voice data can be labeled with speaker identifier and segments of speech (e.g., voice print). During the training stage, the neural network parameters are adjusted and the feature vectors are back-propagated, so that once trained, the neural network can be used for voice authentication. Various training methods are described below in detail with reference to FIGS. **5-8**. Once the neural network is trained, the secure server **130** stores the feature vectors and the neural network parameters (e.g., in the feature vectors **136** and the neural network parameters **135**, FIG. **3**). The feature vectors and the neural network parameters are then used for each case **120** during authentication, as will be described in detail below with reference to FIGS. **8** and **9**.

FIG. **5** is a flowchart representation of a neural network training method **500**, in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, the method **500** is performed at a device (e.g., the server **130**) with one or more processors

(e.g., the processor(s) **310**, FIG. 3) and a non-transitory memory (e.g., the non-transitory memory **320**, FIG. 3) storing instructions for execution by the one or more processors. As represented by block **510**, the method **500** includes obtaining biometric data from a plurality of sources. In some embodiments, as represented by block **512**, the plurality of sources includes sensors (e.g., the sensors **125**) at least partially supported by a housing (e.g., the housing **115**, FIG. 2) of an apparatus (e.g., the case **120**) configured to hold a personal communication device (e.g., the user equipment **110**). In some embodiments, as represented by block **514**, the plurality of sources includes sensors (e.g., the sensors **118**, FIG. 2) of a personal communication device (e.g., the user equipment **110**) held by an apparatus (e.g., the case **120**). In such embodiments, the active base **120** receives a set of biometric data from the user equipment **110** and includes the set of biometric data as part of the biometric data to be transmitted to the device (e.g., the server **130**). In other words, the plurality of active bases **120** obtain biometric data using the sensors **125** on the active bases **120**, and each of the plurality of active bases **120** can also obtain data from the corresponding user equipment **110** held by the case **120**. Thus, the plurality of sources can be the active bases **120** and/or the user equipment **110** in accordance with some embodiments.

In some embodiments, as represented by block **516**, upon obtaining the biometric data from the plurality of sources, the method **500** further includes aggregating at least some of the biometric data across the plurality of sources. For example, as shown in FIG. 3 and explained above, the server **130** combines the IMU data **330**, the location data **332**, and the voice data **334** from  $N$  cases **120** and stores as IMU[k], Location[k], and Voice[k] in the feature data **132**, where  $k=1, 2, \dots, N$ . In some embodiments, as represented by block **520**, the method **500** further includes extracting a plurality of feature vectors **136** from the biometric data. Various embodiments of the feature vector extraction are described in detail below with reference to FIG. 6.

In some embodiments, as represented by block **530**, the method **500** further includes determining a plurality of identifiability scores correspondingly associated with the plurality of feature vectors **360**, where each of the plurality of identifiability scores provides a quantitative characterization of a relative uniqueness of a corresponding one of the plurality of feature vectors. For example, certain features of voice are 20% unique for different people, while fingerprints are 90% unique among a certain population. Thus, by associating an identifiability score of 20% with the plurality of feature vectors **360** extracted from the voice signals, the identifiability score quantitates the relative uniqueness of features associated with voice.

In some embodiments, as represented by block **540**, the method **500** further includes determining run-time authentication neural network parameters **135** based on a function of the plurality of feature vectors **136**. In some embodiments, the run-time authentication neural network parameters **135** enable extraction of one or more of the plurality of feature vectors **136** from biometric data of a particular user, and the run-time authentication neural network parameters **135** are associated with the plurality of feature vectors **136** determined to satisfy an error threshold. Various embodiments of the run-time authentication neural network parameters **135** determination are described below in details with reference to FIGS. 7 and 8.

In some embodiments, as represented by block **542**, the method **500** further includes determining a cost function based on a similarity between two feature vectors **136** for

training the neural network **134**. In some embodiments, the cost function correlates with the error convergence threshold for training of the neural network **134**. For example, by minimizing the cost function, the error threshold is also lowered. In some embodiments, as represented by block **544**, the biometric data include time varying data of a particular source of the plurality of sources. In such embodiments, as represented by block **546**, the plurality of identifiability scores also characterizes a time variance of a subset of the plurality of feature vectors **136** for the particular source of the plurality of sources below a threshold.

For example, in order to learn and extract features that are maximally different for different individuals (inter-subject) and minimally different for the same individual (intra-subject) over time, a cost function can be based on the intra-subject similarity distribution and standard deviation as well as the inter-subject similarity distribution and standard deviation. Using such cost function to train the last hidden layer, the extracted feature vectors **136** can differentiate a third part from an authorized user and recognize the authenticated user over time even though certain biometric data of the authenticated user have time-varying characteristics.

In some embodiments, as represented by block **550**, the method **500** further includes providing to the plurality of sources a set of the plurality of feature vectors **136** and a set of associated run-time authentication neural network parameters **135**. For example, during the authentication phase, the top five features that provide the most unique statistical characterizations of a particular user can be suggested to the user **111** as features for authentication. Alternatively, the user can choose a set of the features for authentication and the secure server **130** provides the corresponding set of feature vectors **136** for authentication.

FIG. 6 is a flowchart representation of a method **600** of feature extraction, in accordance with some embodiments. Specifically, the method **600** illustrates extracting features from biometric data obtained by a small group of cases **120**, e.g., cases  $1, \dots, j$  shown in FIG. 3. The method **600** is one embodiment of the feature extracting step represented by block **520** (FIG. 5).

In some embodiments, as represented by block **610**, the method **600** includes dividing the plurality of sources into groups. For example, as shown in FIG. 3, a subset of the cases **120**  $1, \dots, N$ , e.g., cases  $1, \dots, j$  are included in a group. In some embodiments, as represented by block **620**, the method **600** further includes determining whether or not a feature vector extracted from a set of biometric data from a group of the groups is in a set of training vectors for the group, where, as represented by block **622**, each training vector in the set of training vectors is unique. In some embodiments, as represented by block **630**, the method **600** further includes updating the run-time authentication neural network parameters **135** in response to determining that the feature vector extracted is not in the set of training vectors for the group. In other words, the feature vector extracted during training only needs to be unique within a group. This allows for a wider distance between the mean of inter-subject normal distribution and the inter-subject standard deviation. As such, training on smaller groups enables deeper data depth and provides better feature vectors.

FIG. 7 is a flowchart representation of a method **700** of determining the run-time authentication neural network parameters **135**, in accordance with some embodiments. The method **700** is one embodiment of the run-time authentication neural network parameters **135** determining step represented by block **540** (FIG. 5).

In some embodiments, the method 700 includes an iterative process. In some embodiments, a candidate set of neural network parameters 135 is chosen based on best guess or randomized assignment. During a current iterative process A, as represented by the decision block 710, the method 700 includes obtaining a plurality of feature vectors 136 using the candidate set of neural network parameters 135, and determining whether or not the current iteration of the plurality of feature vectors 136 match a training vector set within the error threshold. In some embodiments, in response to determining that the current iteration of the plurality of feature vectors 136 does not match the training vector set within the error threshold (“No” path from block 710), the method 700 includes updating the candidate set of neural network parameters 135, as represented by block 720. In some embodiments, as shown in FIG. 7, after updating the candidate set of neural network parameters 135 as represented by block 720, the iterative process returns to the beginning of the method 700. In some embodiments, in response to determining that the current iteration of the plurality of feature vectors 136 matches the training vector set within the error threshold (“Yes” path from block 710), the method 700 includes ceasing the iterative process 700 and selecting the most recently updated candidate set of neural network parameters 135 as the run-time authentication neural network parameters 135, as represented by block 730.

FIG. 8 is a flowchart representation of another embodiment of a neural network training method 800. In some embodiments, the method 800 is performed at a device (e.g., the server 130) with one or more processors (e.g., the processor(s) 310) and a non-transitory memory (e.g., the memory 320) storing instructions for execution by the one or more processors. As represented by block 810, the method 800 includes obtaining biometric data from a plurality of sources used by a plurality of users, e.g., N cases 120 with each case holding one user equipment 110 used by a respective user 111, FIG. 1. As represented by block 820, in some embodiments, the method 800 includes conditioning the biometric data, which further includes filtering the biometric data to remove outliers and normalizing the biometric data. In some embodiments, as represented by block 830, the method 800 includes a neural network training process in order to extract feature vectors 136 and generate trained neural network parameters 135.

In some embodiments, the neural network training process 830 includes first establishing a candidate set of neural network parameters 135. For example, as represented by block 840, the neural network training process can start based on best guess or randomized assignment of the neural network parameters 135. The neural network parameters 135 to the candidate set of neural network parameters 135 are then updated according to methods described above with reference to FIGS. 4-7, as represented by block 850. In some embodiments, as presented by block 860, the method 800 includes extracting a plurality of feature vectors 136 (e.g., electrocardiogram, voice, IMU feature vectors, and/or the like) from the biometric data using the candidate set of neural network parameters 135. In some embodiments, as represented by block 870, the method 800 includes determining whether or not the plurality of feature vectors 136 match a training vector set within an error threshold. In response to determining that the plurality of feature vectors 136 do not match the training vector set within the error threshold (“No” path from block 870), the method 800 includes returning to block 850 to update the candidate set of neural network parameters 135. On the other hand, in

response to determining that the plurality of feature vectors 136 match the training vector set within the error threshold (“Yes” path from block 870), as represented by block 880, the method 800 includes selecting the candidate set of run-time authentication neural network parameters 135 to be run-time authentication neural network parameters 135, where the run-time authentication neural network parameters 135 enable extraction of one or more feature vectors 136 from biometric data of a particular user. Though not shown in FIG. 8, in some embodiments, the method 800 includes determining a plurality of identifiability scores correspondingly associated with the plurality of feature vectors 136, where each of the plurality of identifiability scores provides a quantitative characterization of a relative uniqueness of a corresponding one of the plurality of feature vectors 136.

FIG. 9 is a simplified block diagram of biometric identity and authentication performed on the active case 120 during registration, in accordance with some embodiments. Prior to performing the authentication, a case, e.g., case[k] has the neural network (e.g., the neural network 220) installed on the case 120-k. During the enrollment phase, the user 111 accesses the user equipment 110-k held by the case 120-k as usual, while the sensors 125 and/or 118 record the biometric data and generate signals (e.g., the IMU signals, location signals, voice signals and/or the like) as the user 111 performs normal activities. After observing the user behavior for a first period of time, the server 130, upon receiving the biometric data from the case 120-k, learns characteristics of the behavior data (e.g., by setting the neural network parameters 135) and extracts feature vectors 136 for case 120-k, as explained above with reference to FIGS. 5-8. During a second period of the enrollment phase and the authentication phase, the case 120-k obtains the neural network parameters 135 from the server 130, stores as the neural network parameters 222, and uses the neural network parameters 222 to extract feature vectors. Further, the case 120-k generates an authentication score as a function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the plurality of feature vectors outputted from the neural network 220. Additionally, in some embodiments, during the second period of the enrollment phase, the case 120-k compares the feature vectors outputted from the neural network 220 with the feature vectors 136 extracted by the secure server 130. Based on the comparison result, an indication of whether the authentication score is stable over a given threshold is provided to the user.

FIG. 10 is a flowchart representation of a method 1000 for biometric identity and authentication, in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, the method 1000 is performed at a first device (e.g., the case 120) arranged to hold a second device (e.g., the user equipment 110). In some embodiments, the method 1000 includes presenting candidate features to the user 111, as represented by block 1002. In some embodiments, the presented candidate features are the most reliable features as determined by the server 130, e.g., the top five features that provide the most unique statistical characterizations of a particular user. In some embodiments, at least one of the first device or the second device is capable of obtaining the candidate features. In such embodiments, the method 1000 further includes obtaining a set of user-selected features from the candidate features, such that obtaining the biometric data of the user 111 from the first device includes obtaining a set of biometric data associated with the set of user-selected features, and extract-

ing from the biometric data includes extracting from a set of biometric data associated with the set of user-selected features.

In some embodiments, as represented by block **1010**, the method **1000** includes obtaining biometric data of a user of the second device (e.g., the user **111-k** of the user equipment **110-k**). In some embodiments, obtaining the biometric data of the user **111** of the second device includes continuously obtaining a first subset of the biometric data using sensors (e.g., the sensors **125**) of the first device, such as IMU, GPS, microphones, heart rate monitors and/or the like on the case **120**. In some embodiments, obtaining the biometric data of the user **111** of the second device includes periodically requesting from the second device a second subset of the biometric data obtained using sensors of the second device. For example, IMU, GPS, and/or microphones on the user equipment **110** gather a set of biometric data. Such data can be periodically requested for authentication purposes, in addition to the first subset of the biometric data independently collected by the case **120**.

In some embodiments, as represented by block **1012**, the method **1000** further includes conditioning the biometric data, including filtering the biometric data to remove outliers and normalizing the biometric data, as explained above with reference to FIGS. **2** and **3**. In some embodiments, as represented by block **1014**, the method **1000** includes receiving trained neural network parameters **135** from a remote feature extractor (e.g., the neural network **134** on the server **130**) and stores the trained neural network parameters **135** as the neural network parameters **222** on the case **120**. In some embodiments, as represented by block **1016**, the method **1000** includes using an authentication neural network (e.g., the neural network **220**) for extracting a plurality of feature vectors from the biometric data using the locally stored neural network parameters **222**. In some embodiments, the plurality of feature vectors extracted by the authentication neural network **220** are associated with a plurality of identifiability scores.

In some embodiments, as represented by block **1018** and block **1020**, the method **1000** includes generating an authentication score as a function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the plurality of feature vectors extracted by the neural network **220**. In some embodiments, the authentication score calculation includes sending the biometric data to a remote feature vector extractor (e.g., the neural network **134** on the server **130**) through a secure channel, receiving feature vectors **136** extracted by the remote feature vector extractor through the secure channel, comparing the feature vectors **136** with the plurality of feature vectors extracted by the authentication neural network **220** to derive a difference between the feature vectors **136** and the plurality of feature vectors extracted by the neural network **220** as represented by block **1018**, and providing the difference as an input to determine the authentication score.

In some embodiments, during the initial registration, the difference indicates whether the authentication score is stable. For example, if the heart activities vary significantly, the feature vectors extracted during the registration period can be significantly different from the feature vectors received from the remote neural network. An indication signaling the user **111** that such features may not be stable can be provided. In some embodiments, in case the user **111** prefers using the unstable features for authentication, the authentication threshold can be adjusted, e.g., lowered to widen the acceptable range of the authentication score.

Still referring to FIG. **10**, in some embodiments, as represented by block **1022**, the method **1000** includes deter-

mining whether or not the authentication score satisfies an authentication threshold and based on the determination result. In some embodiments, as represented by block **1024**, the method **1000** includes gating electronic access to the second device based on whether or not the authentication score satisfies the authentication threshold. In some embodiments, gating the electronic access to the second device includes providing a lock signal to the second device in response to determining that the authentication score does not satisfy the authentication threshold.

For example, the CMFA can be performed after “what you have” authentication factor(s) (e.g., the case ID) and/or “what you know” factor(s) (e.g., password) have successfully authenticated the user **111**. In such embodiments, the CMFA provides a locking signal when the authentication score fails to satisfy the authentication threshold. In other words, in case an unauthorized third-party cracks the password or forges the fingerprint to gain entry to the phone, the CMFA can detect the different behavioral pattern based on the third-party’s interaction with the phone and lock the phone to stop the third-party from continued use of the user equipment.

In some embodiments, gating the electronic access to the second device includes providing an unlock signal to the second device in response to determining that the authentication score satisfies the authentication threshold. In such embodiments, the CMFA is performed as an unlocking mechanism for the convenience of the user **111**. For example, the user **111** can pick up the phone and move around as part of his normal routine to unlock the phone. Relative to conventional authentication methods based on “what you know” factor(s), the CMFA is less burdensome to the user **111**, e.g., there is no need to memorize anything in order to gain entry to the phone.

In some embodiments, generating the authentication score as the function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the plurality of feature vectors includes deriving an authentication key from the plurality of feature vectors extracted by the neural network **220** (e.g., taking the most significant bits of the features of the obtained feature vectors to form a bit stream), and generating the authentication score as the function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the authentication key. In other words, the multi-factor authentication disclosed herein can also use a randomized key generated from the feature vectors as one factor for authenticating the user.

In some embodiments, generating the authentication score as the function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the plurality of feature vectors extracted by the neural network **220** includes receiving a password from the user (e.g., a character based password), and generating the authentication score as the function of the plurality of identifiability scores, the plurality of feature vectors, and the character-based password. In other words, the multi-factor authentication disclosed herein can also use the user-supplied character-based password (“what you know”) as one factor for authenticating the user.

In some embodiments, generating the authentication score as the function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the plurality of feature vectors includes retrieving an identifier of the first device (e.g., the case ID **242**, FIG. **2**), and generating the authentication score as the function of the plurality of identifiability scores, the plurality of feature vectors extracted by the neural network **220**, and the identifier. In other words, the multi-factor authentication disclosed herein can also use the device identifier (“what you have”) as one factor for authenticating the user.

The foregoing description, for purpose of explanation, has been described with reference to specific embodiments. However, the illustrative discussions above are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Many modifications and variations are possible in view of the above teachings. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical applications, to thereby enable others skilled in the art to best use the invention and various described embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

What is claimed is:

**1.** An apparatus comprising:

a housing arranged to hold a second device, distinct from the apparatus;

one or more sensors, at least partially supported by the housing, operable to obtain at least a portion of biometric data of a user of the second device;

a communication interface connectable to the second device;

a communication device at least partially supported by the housing, operable to receive parameters of an authentication neural network from a server through a secure channel, wherein the parameters are generated by the server upon training a remote neural network using biometric data associated with a group of different users;

the authentication neural network, operable to extract from the biometric data a plurality of feature vectors associated with a plurality of identifiability scores, wherein each of the plurality of identifiability scores provides a quantitative characterization of a relative uniqueness of a corresponding one of the plurality of feature vectors among the group of different users, wherein the parameters of the authentication neural network are generated by the server based on training vectors unique within the group from a group of apparatuses each arranged to hold a respective user equipment used by a respective user in the group of different users; and

a decision unit, coupled to the authentication neural network, operable to generate an authentication score as a function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the plurality of feature vectors, determine whether or not the authentication score satisfies an authentication threshold, and gate electronic access of the user to the second device via the communication interface based on whether or not the authentication score satisfies the authentication threshold.

**2.** The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of conditioning units, coupled to the one or more sensors, operable to condition the biometric data to remove outliers and normalize the biometric data.

**3.** The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the authentication neural network includes an input layer to receive the biometric data from the plurality of conditioning units.

**4.** The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the authentication neural network includes a layer to extract the plurality of feature vectors based on the parameters.

**5.** The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second device includes one or more device sensors to obtain a set of biometric data to be included in the biometric data, and communicates the set of biometric data through the communication interface of the apparatus.

**6.** The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the the apparatus is further operable to, via one or more of the communication interface and the communication device:

send the biometric data to the remote neural network through the secure channel;

receive feature vectors extracted by the remote neural network; and

forward the feature vectors extracted by the remote neural network to the decision unit for comparison.

**7.** The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the decision unit includes:

a comparator to compare the feature vectors with the plurality of feature vectors to derive a difference between the feature vectors and the plurality of feature vectors; and

an evaluator to indicate whether the authentication score is stable based on the difference.

**8.** The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second device includes:

a display to present candidate features to a user for selection, wherein sensors on at least one of the second device or the apparatus are capable of detecting the candidate features; and

one or more input devices to obtain a set of user-selected features from the candidate features, wherein the set of user-selected features is communicated to the apparatus via the communication interface of the apparatus.

**9.** The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the authentication neural network receives updates of the parameters from the server through the communication device of the apparatus.

**10.** The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a key generator to derive an authentication key from the plurality of feature vectors and provide the authentication key to the decision unit for generating the authentication score as the function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the authentication key.

**11.** The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a secure storage to store an identifier of the apparatus, wherein the decision unit retrieves the identifier from the secure storage and generates the authentication score as the function of the plurality of identifiability scores, the plurality of feature vectors, and the identifier.

**12.** A method comprising:

at a controller of an apparatus holding a second device distinct from the apparatus, wherein the apparatus includes a housing arranged to hold the second device, one or more sensors at least partially supported by the housing, a communication interface connectable to the second device, and a communication device:

obtaining, via the one or more sensors, at least a portion of biometric data of a user of the second device;

receiving, by the communication device at least partially supported by the housing, parameters of an authentication neural network from a server through a secure channel, wherein the parameters are generated by the server upon training a remote neural network using biometric data associated with a group of different users;

extracting, by the authentication neural network, from the biometric data a plurality of feature vectors associated with a plurality of identifiability scores, wherein each of the plurality of identifiability scores provides a quantitative characterization of a relative uniqueness of a corresponding one of the plurality of feature vectors among the group of different users, wherein the parameters of the authentication neural network are generated by the server based on training vectors unique within the group from a group of apparatuses each arranged to hold a respective user equipment used by a respective user in the group of different users;

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generating an authentication score as a function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the plurality of feature vectors;

determining whether or not the authentication score satisfies an authentication threshold; and

granting electronic access of the user to the second device via the communication interface based on whether or not the authentication score satisfies the authentication threshold.

**13.** The method of claim **12**, further comprising extracting the plurality of feature vectors based on the parameters.

**14.** The method of claim **12**, further comprising receiving, via the communication interface, a set of biometric data to be included in the biometric data from the second device.

**15.** The method of claim **12** further comprising: sending the biometric data to the remote neural network through the secure channel; and receiving feature vectors extracted by the remote neural network.

**16.** The method of claim **15**, further comprising: comparing the feature vectors with the plurality of feature vectors to derive a difference between the feature vectors and the plurality of feature vectors; and providing an indication of whether the authentication score is stable based on the difference.

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**17.** The method of claim **12**, further comprising: causing the second device to present candidate features to the user for selection, wherein sensors on at least one of the second device or the apparatus are capable of detecting the candidate features; and receiving from the second device a set of user-selected features obtained from the candidate features.

**18.** The method of claim **12**, further comprising receiving updates of the parameters from the server through the communication device of the apparatus.

**19.** The method of claim **12**, further comprising: deriving an authentication key from the plurality of feature vectors; and generating the authentication score as the function of the plurality of identifiability scores and the authentication key.

**20.** The method of claim **12**, further comprising: retrieving the identifier from a secure storage of the apparatus; and generating the authentication score as the function of the plurality of identifiability scores, the plurality of feature vectors, and the identifier.

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